FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Ranger Operations Building
Grand Canyon National Park

The National Park Service is proposing to rehabilitate the Ranger Operations Building, located in the Grand Canyon Village area of Grand Canyon National Park. The purpose of the proposal is to rehabilitate the building, bringing it up to current safety and accessibility standards and to improve functionality. This would be achieved through interior and exterior repairs and rehabilitation actions including such things as replacing the roof shingles, replacing deteriorated wood siding and log rafters, creation of accessible exterior walkways, upgrade of the heating, ventilation and cooling system, modification of interior walls to create more office and storage space, removal of walls in some areas to return these spaces to their historic configuration and restoring the lobby to its original configuration. The proposed rehabilitation is needed because:

- The building does not comply with current building code, safety standards, seismic and structural code, and accessibility requirements.
- Exterior rustic lap siding and exposed log elements are severely deteriorated and in need of stabilization to prevent further loss of historic fabric. Masonry needs minor repair.
- Aged plumbing and mechanical systems are outdated and inefficient. Heating the building is highly energy-consumptive and interior temperatures cannot be maintained at a comfortable level.
- The roofing material is over 15 years old and is showing signs of decay.
- The current management support needs are not being met by the existing interior configuration of space and some of the spaces are not in their historic configuration.

Objectives of the proposal include 1) complying with the most recent accessibility guidelines, building codes, fire codes and life safety standards when rehabilitating the building, 2) preserving the historic features and character-defining spaces and elements, while improving the functionality and safety of the building for current uses, 3) implementing modifications to the building in a manner that will minimize negative physical and visual effects to the cultural resource, and 4) minimizing new ground disturbance surrounding the building.

In January 2003 the National Park Service (NPS) prepared an *Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Ranger Operations Building.* This EA, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, analyzes the impacts that would likely result from implementation of the project. The environmental assessment evaluated two alternatives, Alternative A, the No Action Alternative and Alternative B, the proposed action.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative includes extensive rehabilitation of both the interior and exterior of the building, in full compliance with Director's Order 28 (Cultural Resources Management Guideline) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Weeks 1995). Specific project components are listed below. There will be extensive structural system rehabilitation as part of this project for consistency with building codes. The intent of the interior rehabilitation is to install historically compatible finishes wherever possible. All of the proposed rehabilitation efforts are designed

to preserve the historic features and elements of the building and maintain character-defining features, while improving the functionality and safety of the building for users. Alternative B meets the purpose and need for action by bringing the building up to current codes, sensitively repairing the exterior siding and masonry, upgrading plumbing and mechanical systems, improving heating and cooling, repairing the roof, and addressing interior space configuration.

Exterior Rehabilitation

- Select repointing of masonry
- Selectively remove and replace areas of deteriorated wood siding (approx. 20% horizontal and 10% vertical)
- Remove existing wood shingle roof, replace with asphalt shingle roof similar to historic roof, and repair substrate. The existing roof sheathing and historic framing will remain in place. The intent of this work would be to replace the roofing material with material that is more consistent with the actual historic character. Efforts would be made to mimic original cement asbestos diamond shingles with a substitute material to return the building's diamond roof texture character-defining feature.
- Selectively remove, repair and replace deteriorated log rafters, brackets, and outriggers (approximately 50%)
- Remove and replace main (west) non-historic entrance doors
- Remove blown-in insulation and install R-31 insulation in attic.
- Remove exterior telephone and electric conduit
- Relocate entrance for underground telephone and electrical service.
- Replace existing water service lateral with a larger one, from the building to the main water line in the road on the west side of the building. This will serve the new fire sprinkler system.
- Replace existing electrical service lateral with a new service lateral in approximately the same location (some shift in location may be needed).
- Remove the underground fuel tank and replace with a smaller propane tank in approximately the same location. Two propane tanks may be necessary. An underground gas line will be run from the tank to the building, on the southeast side.
- Install new asphalt walk for disabled access to south entrance door and remove and replace south entrance doors
- Install new handrails at front steps (one on each side)
- Underpin foundation of east vault
- Install floor drain in east vault
- Regrade to create a new drainage swale on east side of building
- Remove sheet metal covers and replace with concrete covers at north vaults
- Remove and replace second floor furnace flue
- Caulk exterior cracks between masonry and stud walls; install backer rod and caulking, cover with masonry
- Remove metal awnings from second story windows on west side
- Rehabilitate windows and add weatherstripping. Historic glass would remain in place. Install screens and blinds at window interior.
- Stain all exterior wood elements
- Remove and replace exterior lighting

- Install lightening protection to roof, east side

Interior Rehabilitation

- Extensive structural system rehabilitation and seismic upgrade.
- Replace wall paneling in some areas, strip to studs, install insulation and gypsum board with wood batten trim to match original
- Remove hollow core doors and install new two-panel wood doors throughout to match original
- Remove dropped ceilings, ceiling lighting and wiring, install new lighting and ceiling finish
- Restore original scored concrete floor in lobby (reception) area
- Restore lobby to its original configuration by including adjacent office space
- Remove existing mechanical system and install new boiler and hydronic radiators throughout.
- Install new electrical underground service (200 AMP three-phase) and install new branch wiring circuits throughout with new isolated ground receptacles
- Install new heating and ventilation systems; install air conditioning
- Install new fire detection and annunciation system
- Install fire sprinkler system and structural seismic upgrades
- Install new security system and secure storage
- Replace kitchen unit in conference room; conference room would remain unchanged
- Remove existing carpet and install new carpet throughout.
- Investigate for original pine finish floor material on second floor. Restore, if possible.
- Remove existing stair handrail and install new handrail on east side of stair. West side would remain as-is to preserve character-defining feature.
- Remove first floor toilet fixtures and patch finishes. Remodel bathrooms for ADA accessibility which would result in one men's and one women's toilet and sink on first floor. Ceramic tile wainscot (from bead wood finish) would be used for the finishes to comply with code-mandated sanitary finishes.
- Paint throughout
- Repair/refinish interior log siding
- Reduce size of (re-frame) second floor closet to allow headroom at stair
- Install new toilet and sink on second floor in 1938 location
- Modify the southern end of the second floor hallway to create a larger open space.
- Retain historic wall finishes, if possible, in some offices on second floor.

Site work (walkways, replacement of underground utility lines and placement of new propane tank(s)) would result in an estimated 0.25 acres or less of ground disturbance on site. The sidewalk replacement would occur on existing walkways and much of the utility replacement would occur under existing pavement or disturbed areas. There is the potential for the removal of trees as a result of grading to correct drainage, but mitigation measures have been developed to minimize this removal, as much as possible. It is estimated that up to 2 – 4 trees would need to be removed for this project.

The staging area will be in an existing disturbed area. Two sites may be used for staging of equipment, materials and a construction office trailer. One site is the location of the old grocery store, across Center Road from the Ranger Operations Building adjacent to parking lot C and the Magistrate building. This

site would likely be used for small machinery and supplies. Another site behind the Backcountry Information Center is also being considered for staging of the construction trailer and larger equipment if needed. This site is an existing parking area and is paved. Both sites are previously disturbed and mitigation measures would be followed to ensure no additional ground disturbance would occur as a result of their use.

The mitigation measures listed below are considered part of the preferred alternative and will be followed during project implementation. These actions were developed to lessen the potential for adverse impacts from implementing the preferred alternative, and have proven to be very effective in reducing environmental impacts on previous projects.

- The staging area for the construction office (a trailer) and construction equipment and material storage would be located in previously disturbed areas near the ranger operations building. All staging areas would be returned to pre-construction conditions once construction is complete. Standards for this, and methods for determining when the standards are met, would be developed in consultation with the Park Restoration Biologist.

- If dust becomes a problem during work, sprinkling with water would occur to reduce dust, both on roadways used and/or in the construction site.

- Construction equipment would not idle for long periods to reduce noise and air quality impacts on site.

- Construction zones would be fenced with construction tape, snow fencing, or some similar material before any construction activity. The fencing would define the construction zone and confine activity to the minimum area required for construction. All protection measures would be clearly stated in the construction specifications and workers would be instructed to avoid conducting activities beyond the construction zone as defined by the construction zone fencing.

- To minimize soil erosion at the project site, standard erosion control measures including silt fence and sandbags would be incorporated into action alternatives. Any trenching operations would use a rock saw, backhoe, and/or trencher, with excavated material side-cast for storage. After trenching is complete, bedding material would be placed and compacted in the bottom of the trench and the utility lines installed in the bedding material. Back filling and compaction would begin immediately after the utility lines are placed into the trench and the trench surface would be returned to pre-construction contours. All trenching restoration operations would follow guidelines approved by park staff. Compacted soils would be scarified and original contours reestablished.

- A Revegetation Plan would be developed for the project by a landscape architect or other qualified individual, in coordination with the Park Restoration Biologist. Any revegetation efforts would use site-adapted native species and/or native seed, and Park policies regarding revegetation and site restoration would be incorporated into the plan. The plan would incorporate, among other things, the use of native species, plant salvage potential, exotic vegetation and noxious weeds, and pedestrian barriers. Revegetation policy (see Chapter 9) of NPS Management Policies (2001) would be referenced in the development of the Revegetation Plan for the project.

- To prevent and minimize the spread of exotic vegetation and noxious weeds, the Revegetation Plan would be followed. The following mitigation measures would be implemented, and would be incorporated into the plan:

- Existing populations of exotic vegetation at the construction site would be treated before construction activities.
- A restoration biologist or park natural resources representative would be on-site during the propane tank(s) layout to provide input on tree avoidance and salvage potential.
- All construction equipment that would leave the road would be pressure washed before entering the park.
- The location of the staging area would be limited to existing roads or the disturbed area.
- Parking of vehicles would be limited to the staging area and existing roads.
- Any fill materials would be obtained from a park-approved source and approved by the Park Restoration Biologist.
- All areas disturbed by construction would be revegetated using site-adapted native seed and plants.
- Post-project exotic plant monitoring should also be conducted in the project area, as time and funding allows.

- Construction workers and supervisors would be provided with tree pruning guidelines. There is the potential for some trees close to the building to require pruning during exterior building repairs, although this is unlikely. Adhering to appropriate methods for pruning, as outlined in the park's pruning guidelines, should minimize the possibility of damage to trees during project implementation.

- Construction workers and supervisors would be informed about special status species. Contract provisions would require the cessation of construction activities if a species were discovered in the project area, until park staff re-evaluates the project. This would allow modification of the contract for any protection measures determined necessary to protect the discovery.

- California condor and Mexican spotted owl conservation measures developed as part of the "Batch" consultation with Fish and Wildlife Service for construction projects in the park (NPS 2002) would be adhered to during project implementation, and are listed below. The Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the park's determination that implementation of the Ranger Operations building rehabilitation, as one of 61 construction projects occurring over the next five years, may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the Mexican spotted owl or the California condor. Concurrence was received on July 9, 2002.

  California Condor
  - Prior to the start of a construction project, the Park will contact personnel monitoring California condor locations and movement within the Park to determine the locations and status of condors in or near the project area.
  - If a condor occurs at the construction site, construction will cease until it leaves on its own or until permitted personnel employ techniques that result in the individual condor leaving the area.
  - Construction workers and supervisors will be instructed to avoid interaction with condors and to contact the appropriate Park or Peregrine Fund personnel immediately if and when condor(s) occur at a construction site.
  - The construction site will be cleaned up at the end of each day that work is being conducted (i.e., trash disposed of, scrap materials picked up) to minimize the likelihood of condors visiting the site. Park condor staff will complete a site visit to the area to ensure adequate clean-up measures are taken.
  - To prevent water contamination and potential poisoning of condors, a vehicle fluid- leakage and spill plan will be developed and implemented for this project. This plan will be reviewed by the Park biologist for adequacy in addressing condors.

- If non-nesting condors occur within 1 mile of the project area, blasting will be postponed until condors leave or are hazed by permitted personnel.
- If condor nesting activity is known within 1 mile of the project area, then blasting activity will be restricted during the active nesting season, if viable nests persist. The active nesting season is February 1 to October 15, or until young are fully fledged. These dates may be modified based on the most current information, in consultation with the Park biologist and the USFWS.
- If condor nesting activity is known within 0.5 mile of the project area, then light and heavy construction in the project area will be restricted during the active nesting season, if viable nests persist. The active nesting season is February 1 to October 15, or until young are fully fledged. These dates may be modified based on the most current information, in consultation with the Park biologist and the USFWS.

Mexican Spotted Owl (MSO)

- If a construction project occurs within a Protected Activity Center (PAC) with no known nest site, then all construction activity will be restricted to the non-breeding season (September 1 – February 28). However, if the project in a PAC is at least 0.5 mile from known nest sites and the project does not include blasting, then the project can be implemented during the breeding season. The breeding season is March 1 – August 31.
- If a construction project outside of PACs occurs within 1 mile of a known PAC nest or roost site, the boundary of a PAC where the nest or roost site is not known, or unsurveyed restricted, protected, or predicted MSO habitat, then all blasting in that project area will be restricted to the non-breeding season (September 1 – February 28).
- If a construction project outside of PACs occurs within 0.5 mile of a known PAC nest or roost site, the boundary of a PAC where the nest or roost site is not known, or unsurveyed restricted, protected, or predicted MSO habitat, then light and heavy construction activity in that project area will be restricted to the non-breeding season (September 1 – February 28).
- Exceptions to the above measure are applicable to the Ranger Operations Building rehabilitation, since this project occurs within the developed urban zone of Grand Canyon Village (as defined and delineated in the batch Biological Assessment). If projects that occur in the developed urban zone are more than 0.25 mile from the MSO situations outlined above, then light construction activity (as defined in the batch Biological Assessment) can occur at any time for those projects.

- All workers would be informed of the seasonal bat roost in the exterior logs of the building and informed of appropriate safety precautions. Repair and/or replacement of logs would occur after July 1, to minimize direct disturbance during the maternity season. The park biologist would be notified when work on the log siding is expected to begin, to determine if this restriction is appropriate, based on the most current roost information. Work may continue through the maternity season of the second year if needed, since bat exclusion methods would be employed following the maternity season of the first year, to discourage bats from returning the second year.

- All workers would be informed of the rodent infestation in the attic. Hantavirus safety precautions would be taken by all workers in this area.

- If previously unknown archeological resources are discovered during construction, a park archeologist will be contacted immediately. All work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery would be halted until the resources could be identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in accordance with the stipulations of the 1995 Programmatic

Agreement Among the National Park Service, the Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona.

- All workers would be informed of the penalties for illegally collecting artifacts or intentionally damaging any archeological or historic property. Workers would also be informed of the correct procedures if previously unknown resources were uncovered during construction activities.

- To minimize the potential for impacts to park visitors, variations on construction timing would be considered. Options include conducting the majority of the work in the off-season (winter) or shoulder seasons and implementing daily construction activity curfews. Unless additional time is authorized by park management, operation of construction equipment would not occur between the hours of 6 PM to 7 AM in summer (May – September), and 6 PM to 8 AM in the winter (October – April), to minimize the impacts of noise from construction activities to visitors and the Canyon's natural quiet.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Environmental Assessment evaluated two alternatives in detail for addressing the purpose and need for action; The No Action alternative and the Preferred Alternative. The preferred alternative is as described previously in this document in detail, but is also summarized briefly below:

Alternative A – No Action Alternative: This alternative would not change the existing situation. The Ranger Operations building would remain in its current condition. The building would continue to be out of compliance with current accessibility standards, safety standards, and building codes. Restrooms would continue to be below current standards for accessibility and would still need repair. Wood siding, log elements, and roofing would continue to need repairs and maintenance. Plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems would continue to be inefficient. Appropriate security measures would continue to be lacking. The no action alternative does not meet the purpose and need for action, but provides a basis for comparing the management direction and environmental consequences of the action alternative. If the no action alternative were selected, NPS would respond to future needs related to this building without major actions or changes in course.

Alternative B – Preferred Alternative: This alternative would fully rehabilitate both the interior and exterior of the building, in full compliance with Director's Order 28 (Cultural Resources Management Guideline) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Weeks 1995). Specific project components are as listed in the section above. There will be extensive structural system rehabilitation as part of this project for consistency with building codes. The intent of the interior rehabilitation is to install historically compatible finishes wherever possible. All of the proposed rehabilitation efforts are designed to preserve the historic features and elements of the building and maintain character-defining features, while improving the functionality and safety of the building for users. Alternative B meets the purpose and need for action by bringing the building up to current codes, sensitively repairing the exterior siding and masonry, upgrading plumbing and mechanical systems, improving heating and cooling, repairing the roof, and addressing interior space configuration.

The Environmental Assessment also includes a discussion of several other alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis. To address the concern for improving outdated mechanical systems, including heating and cooling, various ventilation and cooling system options were explored. Alternatives included passive cooling (through-attic ventilation) and forced air (ducted) systems. Passive ventilation through the attic with operable windows received the highest score (after comparing benefits and costs)

during the Choosing by Advantages (CBA) exercise, although the merits of each alternative were comparable. Air conditioning allowed for higher employee comfort and more options for controlled cooling and improved ventilation, while passive cooling was less expensive and less intrusive. The metal awning on the second story windows is a non-contributing feature to the building and the historic structures report recommended its removal. However, the awning provides necessary shade for these west-facing windows and removal would significantly increase the temperature in these offices, without additional cooling in the building. For these reasons, air conditioning was identified as the preferred alternative. During this same exercise in 1999, window treatments were explored including their function to provide ventilation, views and light. Because the windows are historic, the primary factor evaluated was the potential for impact to historic fabric. Alternatives included retaining existing sash, rehabilitating existing sash, and replacing sash. Rehabilitating existing sash with double glazed and weather stripped sash, and reinstallation of screens at window interiors received the highest score. Options for retaining the existing sash were limited by the fact that this would limit the amount of ventilation through the windows. Replacing the existing sash was expected to result in substantial impact to historic fabric, and therefore was dismissed from further analysis.

Fuel system options were also explored during the CBA in 1999. Alternatives included oil (existing condition) and propane. Electric power was ruled out initially due to its high cost and natural gas was ruled out as not readily available. Using propane for fuel received the highest score during the CBA. Heating system options were also explored during the 1999 CBA. Steam radiator, hydronic radiator and forced air systems were evaluated. The use of a hydronic radiator system received the highest score. However, a forced air system in most of the building and electric heating units in the first floor restrooms was selected as the preferred system due to budgetary needs and the application of cooling to the building.

To address the need to bring the building up to current building and fire code, various options for providing secondary egress from the second floor were evaluated by NPS staff. Preliminary considerations included the use of a folding ladder. This was an allowable approach under the Uniform Code for Building Conservation. However, the authority having jurisdiction and the park safety officer determined this was not an acceptable approach and further evaluations focused on a conventional egress stair. Discussions regarding exterior stairway size and massing, materials, symmetry with building façade, and compatibility with the building were the primary factors evaluated.

Consultation with SHPO occurred during 2001-2002 and included discussions regarding a secondary stair. Consultation on the rehabilitation plans, including the placement and design of an exterior stairway also occurred with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in August – September 2002. Based on input from NPS staff, SHPO staff and recommendations from the Advisory Council, the park carefully reviewed current fire codes and requested an on-site evaluation of the building by the Authority Having Jurisdiction in this area. Bruce Goodwin, NPS Regional Structural Fire Management Officer, conducted an on-site visit on November 19-20, 2002. His evaluation determined that an exception to the requirement for secondary egress from the second floor existed in several model building codes and a waiver, as allowed in the codes, was granted, provided other conditions (such as fire sprinklers and smoke/heat detector systems coverage, etc) were met. This exception was documented in a letter to the park dated November 20, 2002. The conditions listed as binding in the waiver have been incorporated into the project and are as described in the preferred alternative. For these reasons, an exterior stair was dropped from further detailed analysis.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), which guides the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ provides direction that "[t]he environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101:

- fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
- assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
- attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
- preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
- achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
- enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Using selection factors from the Choosing by Advantages process and through the process of internal scoping, scoping with the public and other agencies, the environmentally preferred alternative selected is Alternative B. Alternative B best meets the purpose and need for action, best addresses the overall Park Service objectives and the above evaluation factors. No new information came forward from public scoping or consultation with other agencies to necessitate the development of any new alternatives, other than those described and evaluated in this document.

WHY THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As defined in 40 CFR §1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. As fully discussed in the Environmental Assessment, the preferred alternative will not affect soils; water; prime and unique agricultural land; air quality; soundscape; floodplains; wetlands; state listed special status wildlife and plant species; federally listed wildlife and plant species (except the California condor and Mexican spotted owl, see below); local or regional socioeconomics; minorities or low-income populations or communities; or archeological resources.

Implementation of the preferred alternative would result in a short-term negligible to minor adverse impact to vegetation, primarily due to the potential for removal of trees and some ground disturbance.

Implementation of the preferred alternative may have negligible to minor short-term impacts to general wildlife populations due to increased noise during construction and would have no effect to peregrine falcon or Northern goshawk (both considered special status species).

Implementation of the preferred alternative may impact individual bats that are known to roost in the building, but would not result in a trend toward federal listing or a loss of viability. Mitigation measures would minimize the likelihood of direct adverse impacts to individuals during rehabilitation.

Implementation of the preferred alternative may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the federally listed California condor and Mexican spotted owl. This determination received concurrence from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service on July 9, 2002.

After applying the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's criteria for adverse effects (36 CFR, Part 800.5, Assessment of Adverse Effects), the National Park Service determines that implementation of the preferred alternative would result in a "no adverse effect to historic properties" determination. Concurrence on this determination from the State Historic Preservation Office was received on January 16, 2003.

Degree of effect on public health or safety. The Environmental Assessment evaluated impacts to park operations and visitor experience. This evaluation determined that many of the actions identified in the rehabilitation effort are expected to result in moderate beneficial impacts for visitors. Some proposed project components are designed to benefit the drop-in visitor, including restoration of the lobby to its original configuration and bringing the building up to current accessibility standards. Although the building does not serve a direct visitor support role, rehabilitating a national historic landmark building within the historic district is expected to enhance the character of the area and indirectly enhance visitor experience in the park. The preferred alternative proposes rehabilitation or installation of new systems to bring the building up to current safety, accessibility, and building codes, and some remodeling of existing space within the building. Redistribution of space would result in beneficial changes in the work environment for the employees. Improvements in accessibility would benefit physically challenged employees and visitors. Upgrades to mechanical systems would result in a safe work environment within the building.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. As fully discussed in the Environmental Assessment, geological resources, soils, water, archeological resources, air quality, soundscape, prime farmlands, floodplains and wetlands will not be affected by implementation of the preferred alternative. No wild and scenic rivers are near Grand Canyon Village and none will be affected by implementation of the preferred alternative. No ecologically critical areas, including critical habitat for threatened, endangered, or proposed species, have been designated in the project area and none will be affected. Implementation of the preferred alternative will result in a "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" determination for California condor and Mexican spotted owl.

The Ranger Operations Building is a National Historic Landmark and rehabilitation will be conducted in full compliance with Director's Order 28 (Cultural Resources Management Guideline) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Weeks 1995). The National Park Service determines that implementation of the preferred alternative would result in a "no adverse effect to historic properties" determination. Concurrence on this determination from the State Historic Preservation Office was received on January 16, 2003.

Consultation with concerned tribal officials, Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer, and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been completed.

Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. There were no highly controversial effects identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.

Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. There were no highly uncertain, unique or unknown risks identified in the environmental assessment or during the public review period.

Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. The preferred alternative neither

establishes a precedent for future actions with significant effect nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Impacts of the preferred alternative identified in the environmental assessment were to vegetation, wildlife and special status species, historic resources, visitor experience and park operations. As described in the environmental assessment, a variety of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions have affected or may affect resources in the Grand Canyon Village area. However, the adverse impacts of the preferred alternative will be a relatively minor component of the overall minor cumulative impact, due to the limited scope of the preferred alternative.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. The Ranger Operations Building is a National Historic Landmark building and also occurs within the Grand Canyon Village National Historic Landmark District. These are sensitive cultural resources and have been carefully considered throughout the planning process for this project, as documented in the Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect for this project. The State Historic Preservation Office has concurred with the Park's determination that implementation of the Ranger Operations Building rehabilitation will not adversely impact historic properties.

Because of the minimal amount of ground disturbance and the fact that the area has had previous archeological survey, the potential for impacts to archeological sites is minimal. Consultation with the concerned tribal officials has been completed.

If previously unknown archeological resources are discovered during construction, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery will be halted until the resources are identified and documented. An appropriate mitigation strategy, if necessary, will be developed in consultation with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office and concerned tribal officials.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat. The California condor was listed as an endangered species in 1967. A nonessential, experimental population of California condors has been established in Northern Arizona, and within Grand Canyon National Park the condor has the full protection of a threatened species. It has been determined by park staff that implementation of the preferred alternative "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" the California condor. This determination is based on the potential that condors could be attracted to the increased activity at the project site during construction. Mitigation measures have been developed jointly between park staff and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the condor during project implementation. These measures are included as part of the proposed action and identified under the preferred alternative. The FWS has been consulted and concurred with the determination that condors may be affected, but are not likely to be adversely affected by the implementation of the preferred alternative. The Mexican spotted owl was listed as a threatened species in 1993 and parts of Grand Canyon National Park were designated as critical habitat in 2001. It has been determined by park staff that implementation of the preferred alternative "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" the Mexican spotted owl. This determination is based on the fact that owl habitat is not present within the project area, owls have not been detected in the project area, and the nearest Protected Activity Center is greater than 0.5 miles away. The FWS has been consulted and concurred with the determination that spotted owls may be affected, but are not likely to be adversely affected by the implementation of the preferred alternative.

Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, state or local environmental protection law. The preferred alternative violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES OR VALUES

In addition to determining the environmental consequences of the preferred and other alternatives, National Park Service policy (*Management Policies*, 2001) requires analysis of potential effects to determine whether or not actions will impair park resources. The fundamental purpose of the National Park System, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve park resources and values. National Park Service managers must always seek ways to avoid, or to minimize to the greatest degree practicable, adverse impacts on park resources and values. However, the laws do give the National Park Service the management discretion to allow impacts to park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of the park, as long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the National Park Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the National Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible National Park Service manager, will harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise will be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. Impairment may result from National Park Service activities in managing the park, visitor activities, or activities undertaken by concessionaires, contractors, and others operating in the park. An impact to any park resource or value may constitute impairment. An impact will be more likely to constitute impairment to the extent that it affects a resource or value whose conservation is:

- Necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park;
- Key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or
- Identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents.

Because there will be no major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Grand Canyon National Park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents, there will be no impairment of Grand Canyon National Park's resources or values as a result of implementation of the preferred alternative.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A public scoping letter for the Ranger Operations Building rehabilitation project was sent to a mailing list of approximately 300 people on October 24, 2001. A press release was also issued and the scoping letter was posted on the park's website. Four letters were received. These included a letter from the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department, the Hopi Tribe Cultural Preservation Office, the Zuni Heritage and Historic Preservation Office and one private individual. These responses either offered no specific comment on the proposal and thanked the park for keeping them informed or were in support of the project as described. The Park Service performed a content analysis on this information, information gained from internal scoping, and information gained from scoping with other agencies. From this effort, the Park Service did not identify any additional significant issues for analysis.

The environmental assessment was made available for public review and comment during a 30-day period ending February 26, 2003 through a combination of direct mailing, issuance of a press release and posting on the park's website. One response was received that pointed out a small mathematical error on page 59.

This project was included in a Biological Assessment for Grand Canyon National Park's Park wide Construction Program in 2002-2006. This Biological Assessment included 61 projects and formed the basis for a Batch Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June 2002. On July 9, 2002, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the park's determination that implementation of these projects, including the Ranger Operations Building, may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect the Mexican spotted owl, the California condor, the bald eagle and the sentry milk-vetch. The species applicable to the Ranger Operations Building are the Mexican Spotted Owl and the California condor.

Consultation between the NPS and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on this project is complete. Concurrence was received on January 16, 2003. Discussions with the SHPO occurred in July 2001, May 15, 2002, June 5, 2002, July 10, 2002 and October 16, 2002. Various written and verbal correspondence has occurred between NPS and SHPO throughout the planning phases for this project. Full documentation of the assessment of actions having an affect on cultural resources form (AEF) has been prepared separately for this project.

CONCLUSION

The preferred alternative does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). Negative environmental impacts that could occur are minor and temporary in effect. There are no unmitigated adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, known ethnographic resources, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that the project does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and an EIS will not be required for this project and thus will not be prepared.

Recommended: _____ 3/24/03

Jeffrey Cross — Date

Science Center Director, Grand Canyon National Park

Recommended: _____ 3/27/03

for Joseph F. Alston — Date

Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park

Approved: _____ 4/01/03

Karen P. Wade — Date

Intermountain Regional Director

ERRATA SHEET

Ranger Operations Building
Grand Canyon National Park

The NPS received one electronic mail response to our request for comments on the Ranger Operations Building Environmental Assessment (January 2003). The comment period ended February 26, 2003. The response included a correction of a factual error in the document, as follows:

***Comment**:* Good job. I see only one small error. Page 59, 6th paragraph, line 1: I believe one km = 0.6 mile. You show 1 mile = 0.6 km. 0.6 km = roughly 0.36 mile. Thanks.

> ***Response**:* The reference to kilometers has been removed from this sentence. The sentence now reads: "*Greenway. A paved pedestrian and bike path about 1 mile in length has been constructed from the new Canyon View Information Plaza (CVIP) to Park Headquarters*." The U.S. Customary System is used throughout the document to refer to specific areas and distances. This single reference to the metric system in the Appendix is inconsistent with the rest of the document and was also listed with an incorrect conversion. It was, therefore, removed.